

wrath was turned in another direction, against the Bishop of Norwich, just returned from his unlucky crusade. Although no regular impeachment was yet aimed at the King's favourites, the peers exchanged angry words with their sovereign. They complained that he had thrown over their counsel, deprived them of their constitutional position as the hereditary advisers of the throne, and governed after his own headstrong way. Eichard answered with no less heat that he intended to save the kingdom from the bad government of the nobility.¹ The issues had now become clear. The King's uncles found that their young charge had escaped from their hands and dispensed with their services. The other great nobles, except the few who were the King's favourites, found their influence at Court similarly declining. A new friendliness grew up between John of Gaunt and many of his old opponents. His bitter enemy, the Earl of March, had lately died, and the other lords found they had less reason to be jealous of him than of his nephew.

The feelings of both parties broke out at the Parliament of April '84, which was held at Salisbury. The Earl of Arundel, who had become one of the principal leaders in opposition to the King, spoke very plainly before both Houses on the bad government of the realm. Eichard, who was presiding from his throne over the opening of the Parliament, leapt to his feet, white with anger, and shouted at the Earl: ' If you impute bad government to me, you lie in your throat; go to the Devil ! ' John of Gaunt rose to intervene, and explain away Arundel's words, but the scene was not one which could be forgotten.² Shortly afterwards, while the Court was still at Salisbury, a friar came to the King secretly, to reveal a plot formed against his life and throne by his uncle of Lancaster. Eichard was inclined to believe it, and would even, it was said, have put the Duke to death without further inquiry, had not the other great nobles prevented him. He accepted their advice, but as soon as they had left his presence, burst into hysterical fury, threw his cap and slippers out of the window, and flung himself about the room like a madman.. Meanwhile the friar had been arrested by

¹ Higden, ix. 26.

² Zfcirf, ix, 38.